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ASIA YOUTH ASSEMBLY

EAST TIMOR STRUGGLE

ST. STEPHENS COLLEGE

NEW DELHI - INDIA

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WHAT IS ASIA YOUTH ASSEMBLY - Organized by Christian Conference of Asia in Association with the World Student Christian Federation of Asia/Pacific Region.

It gathers together the experiences of Youth amongs Asian Struggles and provides a renewed force for movements of Christians Youth to work in solidarity with Peoples' Movements.

OFFICIAL HOSTS - National Council of Churches in India - New Delhi

DATES - From 25 September to 10 October 1984

THEME PRESENTATION - " Thy Will Be Done " relating to Asian Issues, New Ecumenical Vision, and Peoples Movements.

TESTIMONIES - Given by people involved in local struggles for justice

3.10.84 Witness I - MiMi Ferreira - East Timor Struggle
" " II - Yoichi Tani - Minamata crises -
6.10.84 " III - Sousanna Ouney - Kanak peoples' Lib. Movement
" " IV - Sri Lanka Tamils' Movements

WORKSHOPS -Focusing on current concerns and sharing of experiences.

Topics:
1. Ideology, Theology, and New Political Vision
2. Women Movements in Asia
3. Peoples' Movements in Asia/Pacific Region
4. Youth Participation: Self-Determination & Social Control
5. Asia Youth & Students Movements: Agenda for the future
6. Drama Workshop

EXPOSURE PROGRAM - Arranged by local hosts with the main aim of exposing Indian realities to all participants and the mutual sharing of participants' experiences eith each other and with local people. Were present at the exposure program people from:

-Women's Movements
- Industrial Workers
- Christian in Solidarity with Peoples Struggles
- Urban Poor
- Landless Labourer

CITIES WHERE EXPOSURE PROGRAMS WERE HELD - New Delhi, Bombay, Culcutta, Goa, Raipur, Bangalore, Trivundrum.

A presentation in drama of each exp. group were presented to the whole Assembly focusing one or two aspects of the exposure.

AIMS OF ATTENDING ASIA YOUTH ASSEMBLY - T o raise the issue of East Timor and to get a positive response.

A. Y. A. " 84 - Was the first major Ecumenical Youth Assembly held in Asia in 20 years. Almost 300 participants from 25 Countries attended the Conference. 10-13 Delegates from each country including resurce persons and guests from: El Salvador, Peru, Argentina (WCC), U.S.A., Canada, U.K., Netherlands, Tuvalu.
East Timor 1 delegate (myself)
Indonesia 9 "

Mamy thanks to Mr. Pat Walsh - Christians in Solidarity with East Timor, Timorese/Portuguese Communities, Mr. W. Smith, Mrs. L. Powierza, Mrs. A. Wait and to everyone who kindly supported me.

After consulting the C.C.A. members, Mr. Pat Walsh approched me in Camberra in July 84, inviting me to take part in A.Y.A.

I arrived in New Delhi via Singapore, on. 23.9.84. I was met at the airport by Rev. Collins, who took me to Y.M.C.A. Hostel where I stayed until 2.10.84. I was then taken to St. Stephens College where the conference took place,until 10.10.84

I attended the exposure program in New Delhi from 26.9.84 to 30.9.84.
I chose " Womens Issues " for my exp. program because I was very keen in learning about Indian Women,- Social life, descrimination, marriage, movements for igual right, etc...
Five days of intensive work and travelling. I visited offices and talked to women responsible for organizations such as:

- Self-Employed Women Organization
- Joint Women Movement
- Saheli

The visit to the slum areas were shocking and heartbreaking.
The women and children were very cooperative.
The exchange of information and sharing of experiences of Indian women and the participants were most valuable.

The gathering of "real christians "took place on 2.10.84 with the arrival at St. Stephens College of 200 participants. Some from their exp. program, others directly from their countries.

Introductions were in line, expressions of happiness, were seen in almost everyone.

In the exhibition areas, setting up displays of struggle materials were an activity that most participants enjoyed.

The materials on East Timor struggle were highlighted by books pamphlets, posters such as:

- East Timor - " Why are the People winning "
- 17 August Indonesian Independence Day
  " What about East Timor Independence ?
- Stop the Genocide in East Timor..
- Map & Flag of Rep. Dem. of E. Timor
- People Betrayed-- Jim Dunn's book and others. . . .

My display did attract a lot of attention, as I expected. It created response and gave an impact to the issue during the following days.

I was introduced to the Assembly, at the opening of Asian Issues, as the 1st time a delegate from E. Timor takes part in a C.C.A. A pleasant sound of clapping followed the warm welcome by the Chairman.

Dr. Mathew Kurian spoke about Asian Issues in a very significant speech, focusing the oppression of Asian Peolpe, Corrupt Govts. Colonialism and Imperalism in Asia/Pacific Region.

My testimony entitled " East Timor Struggle " went for forty minutes. 20 minutes of film - Isle of Fear Isle of Hope - and 20 minutes of speech.
The film gave the audience an idea about geografical situation, history, political situation up to 1975.
I must add that photos of myself were taken by Indonesian Delegates during my presentation.

Several debates on E. T. took place the following days during workshop sessions. At one occasion I was requested to be present at workshop N. 4 Youth Participation: Self-Determination & So Social Control- where a desagreement was going between the Ind. delegates and the participants concerning E. Timor.
It started with a statement made by Ind. Del. that East Timor is now an Indonesian Territory, therefore No discussions or recomendations should be applied to E. Timor, and that the issue of E. T. should not be raised at the A. Y. A. at all.

I was invited to talk for a few minutes. I then rejected strongly the Indonesian delegate's statement and clearly expressed my views on the matter.

The Indonesian delegation were well equiped with materials :
- letters, statements, etc.. which were distributed around to the participants.
One'later' delegate arrived two days before the end of the Conference to lead the delegation, for the final drafting and resolutions on 9.9.84
It is a pity that the Indonesian delegates were behaving in an unchristian maner. Photos were taken of any one who opposed to them, questions of participants' identification, etc.. articles printed in A.Y.A. newsletter about E.Timor. Some of the articles were cut short and others were not publish at all,.as they were unproper to be printed.

On 9.10.84 draftings and recomendation of workshops were presented to the Assembly. Very positive for East Timor. After hearing these recomendations the Indonesian Delegates walked out of the assembly room, stating their position on E. Timor.

After all the recomendations being heard, resolutions were then passed to the Assembly. East Timor resolution was proposed by a member of Indian Delegation, Mr. George Varaguese (Journalist). (See attached Resolution sheet) It was supported by the majority. The comitte then declared the resolution passed.

CONCLUSION: Asia Youth Assembly took place in Delhi under the theme " Thy Will Be Done ". This Assembly consolidates the work of the movement for the past decades and and established the agenda for Asia youth and student movements for the next decades

To take up the issue of East Timor in A.Y.A. was a great step in our relationship with Asia/Pacific Region, considering that the majority of Asian participant s were totally unaware of the East Timorese struggle for freedom and justice.

The response was very positive. I was highly supported during the conference.

There was a genuine interest of solidarity movements to keep in touch and to promote our struggle in their countries.

E. Timor will be raise again in a future C.C.A. conference in Japan in early 1985. Gus Yokoyama, member of C.C.A. will be in touch for the arrengements of a delegate (s) to be sent.

RECOMENDATION: I recomend that we should establish a more effective relationship with solidarity movements within Asia / Pacific Region, in particular C. C. A.

At least two delegates should be sent in future whenever the issue of East Timor is to be raised in a conference

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9/9/84

Resolution

This Assembly shares the deep concern of the worldwide Christian Community at the continuing sufferings violence and abuse of Human Rights in East Timor,

Expresses it's solidariety with the Church and the People of East Timor in their struggle for peace and justice

Joins with the head of the East Timor Church, Mons. Belo in calling for a ceace-fire . The withdrawal of the Indonesian Armed Forces and a dialogue between Indonesia and Fretilin - led - Resistance

Urges the U.N. Secretary General and the Portuguese Govt. in their efforts to achieve a political settlement to uphold the Right of the East Timorese to Self - Determination

Urges each delegation to this assembly to seek the support of settlement of East Timor conflict.

Resolution passed